

REMARKS

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as having insufficient antecedent basis for the following limitation recited therein: "the second one of the second plurality of devices." This rejection is overcome in view of the amendment to claim 10.

Claims 1, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by *Chew* (U.S. Patent 6,389,560). Claims 1, 4, 5 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by *Vrhel, Jr., et al.* (U.S. Patent 6,543,047). Applicant traverses these rejections on the grounds that these reference are defective in supporting a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102.

Independent Claim 1 includes:

"A method comprising:

- setting a plurality of switching devices to cause a first plurality of devices to be coupled to a computer system;
- a control module coupled to the plurality of switching devices and to an additional switching device;
- booting the computer system; and
- detecting one or more errors associated with one or more of the first plurality of devices."

The PTO provides in MPEP §2131..."To anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim...". Therefore, to sustain this rejection *Chew* and *Vrhel, Jr., et al.* patents must contain all of the claimed elements of independent claim 1. However, the control module coupled to the plurality of switching devices and to an

additional switching device, as claimed, is not shown or taught in these patents.
Therefore, the rejection is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, contained in the ...claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

Therefore, independent claim 1 and the respective dependent claims are not anticipated by the cited art and are therefore submitted to be allowable.

Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Vrhel, Jr. et al.* and further in view of *Jessen et al.* (U.S. 5,410,681). Claims 9-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Vrhel, Jr. et al.* and further in view of *Chew*.

Independent Claims 9, 17 and 25 include: "coupling a control module to the first and second switching devices and to an additional switching device."

Applicants traverse these rejections on the grounds that these references are defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

As the PTO recognizes in MPEP § 2142:

...The Examiner bears the initial burden of factually supporting any *prima facie* conclusion of obviousness. If the Examiner does not produce a *prima facie* case, the Applicant is under no obligation to submit evidence of nonobviousness.....the Examiner must step backward in time and into the shoes worn by the hypothetical 'person of ordinary skill in the art' when the invention was unknown and just before it was made....The Examiner must put aside knowledge of the Applicant's disclosure, refrain from using hindsight, and consider the subject matter claimed 'as a whole.'"

The combined references fail to teach or suggest the claimed method and system.

Therefore, there is simply no basis in the art for combining the references to support a 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection because neither reference teaches or even suggests the desirability of the combination. Moreover, neither reference provides any incentive or motivation supporting the desirability of the combination.

The MPEP §2143.01 provides:

The mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination. *In re Mills*, 916 F.2d 680, 16 USPQ2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

Therefore, the Examiner's combination arises solely from hindsight based on the invention without any showing of suggestion, incentive or motivation in either reference for the combination.

Thus, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met.

The Federal Circuit has, on many occasions, held that there was no basis for combining references to support a 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection. For example, in *In re Geiger*, the court stated in holding that the PTO "failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness":

Obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching, suggestion or incentive supporting the combination. *ACS Hospital Systems, Inc. v. Monteffore Hospital*, 732 F.2d 1572, 1577, 221 USPQ 929, 933 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

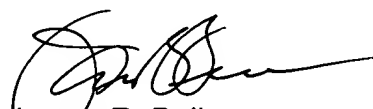
The Federal Circuit has also repeatedly warned against using the applicant's disclosure as a blueprint to reconstruct the claimed invention out of isolated teachings in the prior art. See, e.g., *Grain Processing Corp. v. American Maize-Products*, 840 F.2d 902, 907, 5 USPQ2d 1798, 1792 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

More recently, the Federal Circuit found motivation absent in *In re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350, 47 USPQ2d 1453 (Fed. Cir. 1998). In this case, the court concluded that the board had "reversibly erred in determining that one of [ordinary] skill in the art would have been motivated to combine these references in a manner that rendered the claimed invention [to have been] obvious." The court noted that to "prevent the use of hindsight based on the invention to defeat patentability of the invention, this court requires the examiner to show a motivation to combine the references that create the case of obviousness." The court further noted that there were three possible sources for such motivation, namely "(1) the nature of the problem to be solved; (2) the teachings of the prior art; and (3) the knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art." Here, according to the court, the board had relied simply upon "the high level of skill in the art to provide the necessary motivation," without explaining what specific understanding or technological principle within the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art would have suggested the combination. Notably, the court wrote: "If such a rote invocation could suffice to supply a motivation to combine, the more sophisticated scientific fields would rarely, if ever, experience a patentable technical advance."

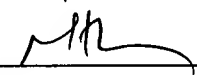
Therefore, independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 and the claims dependent therefrom are submitted to be allowable.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-35 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


James R. Bell
Registration No. 26,528

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HAYNES AND BOONE, L.L.P.
901 Main Street, Suite 3100
Dallas, Texas 75202-3789
Telephone: 512/867-8407
Facsimile: 214/200-0853
ipdocketing@haynesboone.com

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